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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution,

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ALSIKE CLOVER (*Trifolium hybridum*).

A perennial clover, intermediate in size and general appearance between the common red clover and white clover. The branching, leafy stems, while not growing as large as those of red clover, commonly reach a height of 18 inches and even 3 feet or more on slough land. The fragrant blossoms have a pinkish tint and furnish large quantities of honey, the plant being often sown for that purpose by bee keepers.

Distribution.—In general alsike clover will grow successfully where red clover grows, but is best adapted to a cool, humid climate. It produces maximum yields near the boundary lines between the United States and Canada, in the regions of the Great Lakes and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It is also grown very successfully in some of the irrigated Rocky Mountain valleys and in certain portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, and other sections where red clover now fails to produce satisfactorily.

Soil requirements.—The most suitable soil for alsike clover is a deep, moist, clay loam, with a high percentage of lime. Slough soils that have been deposited by the action of water are also well adapted to alsike. Good crops are also grown on sandy loam soils well supplied with humus, but this clover will not succeed well on dry, sandy or porous, gravelly soils. It will succeed on soils too wet for red clover.

Sowing.—Like red clover, alsike clover may be sown either alone or in small-grain crops in early spring in the North and early spring or autumn in the southern regions. When sown in the spring in small-grain crops the common practice is to allow the action of the weather to cover the seeds. Very often, however, better results are obtained if the seed is given a slight covering with a smoothing harrow or weeder. When sown alone the seed bed should be well settled and finely pulverized on top and the seed given a light covering. On strong, moist soil it should be sown with a grass, such as timothy, orchard grass, or redtop, to prevent lodging. It matures about the same time as these grasses and improves the quality of the hay. On lighter soils where the growth is not heavy, successful crops are grown when sown with a grain crop or alone. When sown alone for seed or hay from 5 to 8 pounds to the acre are usually required. When sown with a mixture of grasses the amounts vary with local conditions, but a fair average for most conditions is alsike 4 pounds and timothy 8 pounds per acre, or alsike 5 pounds and 10 pounds of ordinary redtop seed. A favorite mixture in the southern tier of States is 5 pounds of orchard grass, 10 pounds of tall meadow oat-grass, 4 pounds of redtop, and 4 pounds of alsike. Some farmers use a mixture of red clover and alsike, since the latter is a perennial and will cover the ground when the red clover runs out.

Alsike is often used to good advantage in pasture mixtures, especially on wet land and in regions where red clover is not successful. Where alsike is used for pasture exclusively for horses and mules it sometimes causes a skin disease. When cut for hay it should be cut just after it has passed full bloom, and it should be handled the same as red clover.

